

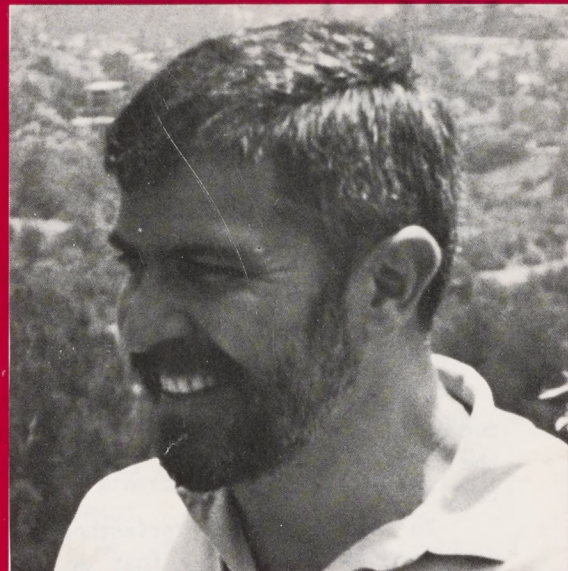
Celebrating

our

Future

1968-1984-2000

THE NEXT 16 YEARS



Journey

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 1984



CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

by Nancy Radclyffe

Collective Writer and Senior Chaplain

THE CALL! THE CALL? By Rev. Brenda Cisneros-Hunt Guest Columnist

Perhaps one of the biggest barriers to parity between the ministry of the clergy and the ministry of the laity is the historical indiscriminate use of "the call."

In speaking of the "priesthood of all believers" we sometimes acknowledge that we are all called to serve, to love and to spread the good news, but always there is the distinct difference between being called and having "the call." One is presumably more important and more sustaining than the other.

As a person responding via the ministry of the clergy, I've never given much thought to what "the call" means in my life. It probably has just been what makes it possible to pastor, indeed makes me want to pastor, in the local church, the district, the fellowship. Maybe it has been "the call" that has made ridiculous situations tolerable and the impossible ones workable. Somewhere, inarticulated in my brain is a statement like ... "and of course it's the same for lay folks...it's their calling to serve that sustains them..."

"The call" as sustenance...? If their call is to...and my call is to... and "the call" itself will sustain us...? I don't like the way it sounds fresh... I'll dislike it more tomorrow. To trace where the idea of "the call" came from seems like it would need to start at some ancient place -- no modest proposal here!

Who was it that first started talking about "the call" of God and how did we get to today? I remember that Abraham and Sarah were "called" to pack up, move out and start a whole new tradition and nation. I remember that the prophets of Israel "called" everyone to action in the name of God. I remember too reading Wolterstorff's comment in Until Justice and Peace Embrace... "shalom is both God's cause in the world and our human calling..."!

An essential part of the credentialing of UFMCC clergy revolves around how we articulate our

"call." There are numerous study series being passed back and forth among our churches with titles that incorporate "call"... "Called into Wholeness," "Responding to Your Call," etc., and weren't there a few meetings in Toronto using the phrase "Another Call?" Not too many services go by here without someone saying something about being "called" into new life.

While working on the Lenten material for this year, one local gadfly started all of this questioning by asking, "Well, pastor, how do we teach people to minister beyond 'the call?'"

For a bit, I just sat and looked at him...beyond...is that some new term in the ecumenical movement I've missed...beyond???

If "the call" of God might be seen as simply an invitation into new life, and I believe it is, then "the call" is not that which sustains me or you. It is something else that sustains us. Surely there is no difference between calls. We acknowledge that we all "minister" differently, but that has always seemed like we're saying there are two "callings," one to the clergy ministry and another to the ministry of the laity. We've supported the implied thought that there is a difference, and one is bigger and more important than the other. If that is even remotely true, then at the very best we've reversed the order.

Why are we "called" to ministry? Ministering in any aspect is hardly discernible from numerous other types of humanistic services. Social workers can be as involved in proclaiming liberty as a pastor, and sometimes more effectively. An emergency room nurse is as involved in new health and living and dying as a pastor. The foggy notion rumbling around in the back of our collective minds has sometimes led us into rhetorical questions like "Am I being Christ-like or just a sensitive human being?" The next question after that one is "Am I more Christian than 'they' are?"

Then, out of the blue of the western sky and ethic, comes not a plane, a pilot and niece Penny, but "Of course, I'm more Christian!"

"The call" is a myth we've helped perpetuate; the call is a reality we've expanded beyond a practical

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JOURNEY

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COVER: Paula J. Schoenwether

PHOTO: Marguerite Scroggie

CONNECTION

by Ravi Verma
Director of Administration

FELLOWSHIP SUNDAY

Those of you who have seen the movie "Gandhi" will remember the moving scenes during the partition, by the British in 1947. Many Hindus and Muslims left their homes to move into what is now India and Pakistan.

This massive migration of refugees is one of the largest forced movements of people in human history. My parents were amongst the Hindu refugee families who were forced to leave behind their homes, friends and belongings in Pakistan and they migrated to Bombay in India.

From the stories they have told me the first few years were very difficult both emotionally and financially. However, by the time I was born in 1951 they had begun to establish themselves and along with the rest of the country were very hopeful and excited about the future in Independent India.

To them, I and my generation represented the "new country" and symbolized the new age that was dawning in India.

It was a wonderful way to grow up--steeped in the rich culture, history and tradition of the past coupled with the openness to the new world, new ideas and opportunities! This upbringing molded my future and brought me to the United States for graduate studies. It led me to an affirming realization and celebration about my sexuality and spirituality.

Recently it led me to change career's from Research Management to my current position as Director of Administration of UFMCC. What I found in my early UFMCC days and find today is how our Fellowship also grew out of such a rich histo-

rical tradition while being part of the New Age and symbolizing the New Church in today's world. Many of us have had to leave behind our old countries, friends, homes and have settled in a new land. We have learned to reclaim our past traditions/histories and have learned to be open to new ideas, new ways and opportunities!

We've been on this journey for 16 years--and are now 16 years away from the start of a new century! We have had a glorious past and now we are being called on to turn our energies and attention to the future growth, mission and direction of UFMCC.

We are being called upon, again, to be open to the future, to lovingly receive the future and to mold it under God's grace!

God has used us mightily in these last 16 years and we have been good and faithful stewards of

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Fellowship Sunday!

By now, your church has received a letter offering to have a taped sermon by Rev. Perry available for you to play in your church on Fellowship Sunday, October 7, 1984. An attractive poster, press kit and worship materials will accompany the tape.

In addition, a full page ad will be placed in the San Francisco based Advocate giving the meeting time and telephone of all MCC churches where Rev. Perry's message will be heard.

Our theme during this 16th Birthday of UFMCC is "Celebrating Our Future!" as we are now only 16 years away from the 21st Century. On the eve of the 3rd Millennium, we know MCC has a special mission -- Join us as we celebrate that mission with tens of thousands of sister and brothers all over the world!

a christian conference for Lesbians and gays of color

UFMCC's THIRD WORLD CONFERENCE: A TIME FOR COMING OUT by Renee McCoy

There have been several questions asked around the Fellowship about our upcoming UFMCC International Third World Lesbian and Gay Christian Conference to be held October 5-7 in New York City. In this article I will answer these questions in hopes that we will have the understanding, support and prayers of every congregation in October.

Question #1: Who are Third World persons?

The term "Third World" came into use around World War II out of political, economic and military circles as a way of talking about what's happening in the world and to whom it's happening. The capitalist countries of the West (USA and Europe) were known as first world; and the nonaligned, so-called nonindustrialized countries (Asia, Africa, and Latin America) were called third world.

As things and peoples developed and progressed it refined to include all non-white nations and all countries and peoples that have been colonized by the first and second world powers.

Based on the characteristics of colonialism this includes Native Americans and Asians, Afro-Americans, Hispanics and Indians born in this country. The characteristics of colonialism are as follows: 1. colonial subjects have their political decisions made for them; 2. indirect rule exists which provides for local colonial administration through the use of agency chiefs who exercise executive authority, ie. banks, stores; manipulation of political boundaries and devising restrictive electoral systems, ie. gerrymandering; 4. colonies exist to enrich the "colonizer" and thus maintain economic dependency. For example: American ghettos produce labor, yet have no economic power; colonial systems drain the colony of what economic resources it has, for example credit is difficult for Third World persons to acquire, and when they do it's at a high rate of interest for inferior goods and services; and 6. the greatest escape for the colonized subject is to be assimilated into the mainstream of the "mother country." Now, think about it and you will understand how Third World persons in America fall under the label of "Third World."

Question #2: Why a Third World Conference?

For a number of reasons, not all the fault of everyone, we have created a church, UFMCC, which reflects, primarily, the culture and lifestyles of caucasian persons. The cultures, religious background and lifestyles of Third World persons have to a great degree been excluded. If we are to be an all-inclusive church it is necessary to intentionally include other peoples and their lives. This is easier said than done.

Third World persons in UFMCC have not spent enough time together, talking about their needs and resources to present to UFMCC a clear picture to include. In the meantime established congregations cannot simply put everything on hold, waiting for the clear picture to be presented. What we all must first realize is that UFMCC is the first attempt to make the Christian Church inclusive of Lesbians and Gays and our total story is still unfolding and developing.

What seemed like the most effective solution to this dilemma is for business to go on as usually with minor changes occurring as consciousnesses were raised, and for Third World persons to take on the responsibilities of meeting and defining and cataloging their needs to be included in the total life of the Church.

This will take many more conferences, I am sure, but bit by bit we are all discovering who we are and as our images grow, so will our understanding of the many revelations of God that are happening in and around us.

Question #3: Will whites be allowed to attend and will there be anything at the conference for them?

Not only will white people be allowed to come, they are also encouraged to attend and to take an active part. Please, however, if your church or district is sending someone, try to send a Third World person, or to help a Third World person get there. After all, it is a Third World conference.

This year's conference will offer several "how-to" workshops, such as how to do community organizing and how to do outreach with Third World persons. There will also be a workshop on racism, facilitated by a white person, that is structured specifically for white persons. There will be space set aside for whites to get together and decide how they can best work with Third World people in building a truly inclusive Church.

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continued from page 4

There will, however, be workshops that are closed to whites and whites will be expected to be sensitive to the need for Third World peoples to make their own decisions unencumbered by others who believe theirs is the only way of doing things.

Question #4: What Fellowship issues will the Conference address?

At our last General Conference several recommendations were presented through the Department of Third World Ministries' Report on the 1982 Third World Conference. During the business portion of this next conference these recommendations will again be addressed and refined, along with reports from persons who were given specific tasks in 1982.

Hopefully, we will come up with more concrete and clearer methods of implementing these recommendations as well as many new recommendations. We will again discuss beginning Third World congregations as extensions of existing ministries on the local level. We will discuss a process through which more Third World persons can be actively included at all levels of UFMCC. We will decide how to "share the load" and keep the few well known Third World persons from burning out. We will determine new needs and areas of ministry and make plans for carrying out the task of helping ourselves and one another.

Question #5: What will be happening there?

There will be workshops, worship services, panels, and speakers through which the following issues will be handled: Racism among Third World persons; white racism; self-hatred among Third World persons; men and women's issues; health issues; exoffenders and prisoner issues; sexuality and the bible; Third World churches; issues facing Third World deaf people; and ways of working in local congregations and communities.

The keynote speaker is the Rev. Dr. Emilie Townes from Chicago, who will share her experiences of pastoring a Third World Lesbian and Gay congregation in Chicago and her experiences as a Baptist minister. There will be lots of singing and music and fun, as well as a lot of work and decision-making.

The first night of the conference will be concluded with a party in the style of the old Harlem House parties which will be held in my home (I have a reputation for giving great parties!). There will be bar trips to historic Gay places and to our newest Gay spot, the Cotton Club (yes, the same one that the movie was made about. The conference will conclude with a worship service and dinner at Harlem MCC.

This year's conference will be held at Union Theological Seminary. The campus is quite beautiful and it is an easy commute to all parts of New York. The theme of the conference is Isaiah 55:12 - "You shall indeed go out in joy and be led forth in peace." This conference will truly be a time for all of us, especially

Third World people, to go out into our worlds joyfully spreading the message of God's healing love and acceptance to all people and inviting ALL PEOPLE into our midst in celebration. See you there!

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INDEED
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OUT
IN
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aids...

A Gay Man's Health Experience

PART III

By Steve Pieters,
Interim Assistant Pastor
MCC in the Valley

Lately, I have been writing about depression, anger, abandonment, victimization and death in the face of aids. The trouble is that I want to write something that is up and positive, something life-giving. Something that reflects God's grace in the midst of this horrible experience. So, I find myself asking questions: what does faith do for me in the face of disease and death? How do I know that God loves me in the context of having the decade's most dreaded disease? What sorts of things give me dignity and self-respect when I sense some people literally recoil from me in fear? Why am I so healthy when the doctors keep telling me I have all these terrible diseases? How does knowing that I shall die make me different from the doctor who told me the news? Where do I get the strength to live in the wilderness? Why is bubble-bath such a Godly experience?

Some thoughts from my diary, not necessarily in answer to these questions:

June 6, 1984

When I get angry, I get terribly angry these days.

I get angry with my doctor. I try to be understanding: he deals with a terrible case load and he sees many persons with aids. Many of his patients have died and he has said he feels horribly helpless. He does not get enough time off and a great many people need his help and attention. So, I understand why he is irritable when I

talk with him, but it still makes me angry that my doctor of all people should sometimes treat me as if I am just another sick faggot with aids for him to feel helpless about. It makes me angry that it is so difficult and stressful to work with persons with aids.

It makes me angry to have aids. How do I express the rage I feel about the injustice of it all? I feel cheated, cut off, unfairly punished. I was taught as a child that I should not get angry. So, I learned to bury the feeling. I have learned as an adult that to bury my anger is destructive and only leads to more problems. So, what do I do with the anger that news like aids provokes? Sometimes I get out my collected Shakespeare and rage with King Lear, "Blow, winds, and crack your cheeks! Rage, Blow!" When I feel less lofty, I yell at traffic, throw tennis balls against a wall, or write a litany of anger about my doctor's inaccessibility.

The power of the anger I feel can be very frightening. But I am learning to express it. As Paul writes in Ephesians 4:25-26; "Let everyone speak the truth with their neighbor, for we are members, one of another. Be angry, but do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger." Good Christians do get angry. The question is how do we deal with it in a loving and creative way?

June 10

I was invited to a party in Hollywood with a group of non-MCC Gay male friends, with whom I had spent social time before. This time, the host invited me early to

tell me that all the gang knew that I have aids, but please would I refrain from talking about it, so that I would not ruin his party.

During the party, one of the men noticed that I was not smoking anymore. I told him I had quit a couple of weeks ago. He wanted to know how I did it. I replied that I got help in quitting, and that my motivation was boosted quite a bit by finding out that I have cancer.

WELL...the party stopped dead, one of the guests burst into tears, the host shot me a look that should have killed me right there, the questioner was stunned into silence, and our co-host suggested that maybe this was the time for everyone to hit the bars. So, the party broke up and I went home. They didn't want me to tag along to the bars. My host later told me that they figured I wouldn't want to go out since I obviously could not pick anyone up.

Maybe I should have respected the host's request and not mentioned my disease. I have been in enough closets in my life to know that I do not want to build a new one around me at this point. I am not going to be closeted or ashamed of my disease. I know that it is not always appropriate to talk about it. But, when somebody asks me not to, it feels much like when someone asks me not to talk about being Gay: it is just the right time.

June 15

At District Conference last month, a couple of people tried to call me an "aids victim." First at the FFO workshop, then again before the Business Meeting, people wanted

to tell me about "aids victims" they have heard about or known. I told them that as a person with aids (PWA), I did not want to be victimized by being called a victim. One of them said that anyone who contracts any disease is a victim. That may very well be, I replied, but I had allowed myself to be victimized enough in my lifetime to know that I do not want to be victimized now. Just as I want to be thought of as living, not dying, I want to be thought of as a person rather than a victim. If people think of me as a dying victim, and I buy it, then I will be a dying victim of this disease. If people think of me as a living person, then it will help me be a living person fighting this disease. Victim implies defeat and I have not been defeated by this thing yet!

June 17

Many people expect me to be depressed, defeated and tired. Friends who call long distance to check up on me approach the conversation ready to deal with a very sad person. What they usually find is someone who is fighting the sadness of the situation with laughter and an attempted joyfull outlook. People in the medical and social service field are as guilty of assuming depression as lay people. I get the feeling that they need me to be depressed so that they can feel useful. A social worker who works with PWA's insisted that from my intake interview, she could tell I was severely depressed. When I said I wasn't felling depressed right then, she said, "It's OK, Steve, we're friends here. You can trust us. Here you can really be depressed." She wanted me to be depressed! Somebody who was not aware of what was happening might have bought right into it and become depressed: if this authority figure is saying I should be depressed, then I'll be depressed!

The next day, in my chemotherapy compliance interview, many of the questions presumed a kind of

helpless, sad state on the patient's part. Thus are we taught to be depressed about our illness. And this is exactly the opposite of what we need, which is laughter and a positive, creative, healing attitude. The fact of the matter is that this disease can be very depressing and I have been depressed from time to time. I do not need any encouragement to be depressed. I am afraid that if I allow myself to really sink into the depression that I feel sometimes, then I will get very sick. So, my friends will not assume depression, but if they see it, will help buoy me, and get me out of it in creative and joy-filled ways. I understand more and more how depression is my mortal enemy. It could kill me. So, my friends will assume hopefulness and joy which will help me feel hopefulness and joy, in spite of the depressing nature of the situation!

June 21

I am very grateful for my faith. My faith gives me specific suggestions and answers for dealing with this situation in my life. There is comfort for the pain. There is instruction on how to behave gracefully, and what to believe about what is happening to me. Most of all there is a communion with a history full of people before me, who have experienced seemingly senseless suffering: good people to whom bad things have happened. There is comfort and strength in that solidarity of faith.

Today I feel frustrated, angry, sad and confused. I'm trying to cheer myself up. Think positive. Think about your faith. Think about your God who loves you and really cares for you. Think about how God is the Creator of Life, and in Jesus has vanquished death...think about what that means for someone with aids. God has given me everything I need to meet the challenge. Think about how God has experienced these very same feelings of abandonment, desertion, betrayal, anger and grief. Jesus

is my brother in this; he is right here with me. There, I feel better. Once again I am lifted up by the faith my people have taught me.

June 28

While I hold onto the hope for complete healing of my aids, I also have to realistically face my death.

I know that I shall die. Someone who has not been given a terminal prognosis can continue to deny that they will die. The doctor who told me that I have a terminal condition may die before me, perhaps in a car accident. But I know that I shall die in a way that he does not. The realization of the reality of my death has done some interesting things to my concept of life. It has made me appreciate life much more. It has given me more compassion somehow. It has provided me with the opportunity to meet my "Self" in ways that I never have before. It has put me in closer touch with the reality of God in my life. It has given me incredible energy.

People die every day, all over the world. It is the most common experience, apart from birth. And it is as personal, unique and sacred as birth. I have read that no one dies before their time, not even five minutes early. Nor do we die too late. I find some comfort in that idea, and in the fact that I have the advantage of being able to prepare myself in ways that many people do not.

I am finding that people who are scared of me are actually scared of their own deaths and this usually means that they are scared of life. People who can get beyond the fear and deal realistically with dying find great rewards. I have read that in many cultures it is considered sacred space in a person's life when a loved one dies, because the dying process so vividly confronts a person with decisions about living. Through my confrontation with death, my friends are making basic decisions

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Samaritan

ORIENTATION TO PASTORING

By Marcie N. Wexler
MCC in the Valley

For a few MCCers, Los Angeles will be remembered as more than the home of the 1984 Olympics. The first Samaritan Orientation to MCC Pastoring program was held June 11 through July 22 at MCC Los Angeles. It was a six week intensive where students were trained by some of the best in our Fellowship. Subject areas covered were counseling, Christian education, preaching, administration and self-care.

The program opened with a tour of MCC points of interest guided by Rev. Elder Dr. Troy Perry. The impact of our history was brought home when we visited the empty lot which was once the location of the arsoned church at 22nd and Union, MCC LA's first permanent home.

The next six weeks were a whirlwind of classes: Pastoral Counseling taught by Rev. Nancy Radclyffe, Chaplain of SLACC; Drug and Alcohol Abuse Counseling by Rev. David Farrell, MCC San Diego and Rev. Shelley Hamilton of DeColores MCC; Sexuality Counseling, Rev. Ken Martin, MCC in the Valley; Communication Skills, Rev. Elder Freda Smith, MCC Sacramento; Planning/Teaching, Larry Gaynier, MCC Detroit; Music in Worship, Rev. Danny Ray, MCC Dallas; Rites and Sacraments, Rev. Jennie Boyd Bull, MCC Baltimore; Third World Ministries, Rev. Delores Berry, MCC Portland and Rev. Jose Mojica, Director of Hispanic America; Laity Concerns, Larry Rodriguez, Assistant Chair, Commission on Laity; the Black Tradition/Preaching, Rev. Delores Berry, MCC Portland; Sermon Preparation and Preaching Practicum, Rev. Jimmy Brock, MCC Orlando; Church Administration, Rev. Elder Don Eastman and Rev. Marge Perry,



Taken at Mann's Chinese Theater, the first Sunday of the program after attending church at All Saints MCC, W. Hollywood. Front Row (L to R): Rev. Willie Smith, Sean Pace, Barb Sagat, Jennifer Nelsen (Marcie's daughter), Marguerite Scroggie, Marcie Wexler. Second Row: John Murrow, Rev. Brad Andersen, Jill Frankie, Joseph Totten. Back Row (standing): Vicky Nelsen, Rev. Pat Mechem, John Dingle, Michael Weeks, Bill, Alan Robertson, Michelle Carmody. Missing from photo: Deborah Simmons and Sharon Taylor.

MCC Dallas; Self-Care and Growth, Rev. Jeffery Pulling, Dean of Samaritan Extended Studies.

The students represented diverse backgrounds and geographic areas. John Dingle, MCC Sydney, Australia, attended the first two weeks, as did Don Magill, MCC Pomona Valley, CA. Susan Deitrick, from MCC Pomona Valley joined the class for the second and third weeks.

Deborah Simmons, MCC Pomona Valley, attended the initial four weeks. Carol Youngblood, MCC Ft. Lauderdale, FL, joined us for the last four weeks. Students attending all six weeks were Michelle Carmody, MCC Eugene, OR, Jill Frankie, MCC Portland, OR, Sharon Taylor, MCC in the Valley, North Hollywood, CA, Joseph Totten, MCC Washington, D.C., Michael Weeks, MCC Washington, D.C. and Marcie

Wexler, MCC in the Valley.

The program hosts were the family at MCC Los Angeles. They were gracious, patient and loving throughout the six weeks. The staff, board and fellowship hall employees went to great ends to attend to our needs. Special thanks go to Rev. Elder Jeri Ann Harvey, Rev. Marianne Van Fossen, Administrative Support Liaison, Jifke Driessen, Board of Directors Liaison and Jimmy Borge, Social Hall Director. Extra special people were the ones we saw every day: Danny, Phil, John, JoJo and especially Edith Slovack, who lovingly prepared our meals.

In addition to the space donated by MCC LA for our use, many Los Angeles residents hosted us in their homes for dinner seminars and for temporary housing during the

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passionate and less compas-
te. Thus began monastic life
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You are the church: the church
is none other than ourselves, and
when we complain about "the
church," we also complain about our
selves, because the church is as
good as we are.

The church is human: if we are
the church, then it is as human as
we are, similarly in need of for-
giveness from us and from God and a
similarly a recipient of God's
grace. This is true of your local
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Samaritan

ORIENTATION TO PASTORING

By Marcie N. Wexler
MCC in the Valley

For a few MCCers, Los Angeles will be remembered as more than home of the 1984 Olympics. The first Samaritan Orientation to Pastoring program was held June through July 22 at MCC Los Angeles. It was a six week intensive where students were trained by some of the best in our Fellowship. Subject areas covered were counseling, Christian education, preaching, administration and self-care.

The program opened with a tour of MCC points of interest guided by Rev. Elder Dr. Troy Perry. The impact of our history was brought home when we visited the empty lot which was once the location of an arsoned church at 22nd and Union. MCC LA's first permanent home.

The next six weeks were a whirlwind of classes: Pastoral Counseling taught by Rev. N. Radclyffe, Chaplain of SLACC; and Alcohol Abuse Counseling by Rev. David Farrell, MCC San Diego; and Rev. Shelley Hamilton, DeColores MCC; Sexuality Counseling, Rev. Ken Martin, MCC in the Valley; Communication Skills, Rev. Elder Freda Smith, MCC Sacramento; Planning/Teaching, Larry Gaynier, MCC Detroit; Music in Worship, Rev. Danny Ray, MCC Dallas; Rites and Sacraments, Rev. Jennie Boyd Bull, MCC Baltimore; Third World Ministries, Rev. Delores Berry, MCC Portland and Rev. Jose Mojica, Director of Hispanic America; Laity Concerns, Larry Rodriguez, Assistant Chair, Commission on Laity; the Black Tradition/Preaching, Rev. Delores Berry, MCC Portland; Sermon Preparation and Preaching Practicum, Rev. Jimmy Brock, MCC Orlando; Church Administration, Rev. Elder Don Eastman and Rev. Marge Perry,

versive backgrounds and geographic areas. John Dingle, MCC Sydney, Australia, attended the first two weeks, as did Don Magill, MCC Pomona Valley, CA. Susan Deitrick, from MCC Pomona Valley joined the class for the second and third weeks.

Deborah Simmons, MCC Pomona Valley, attended the initial four weeks. Carol Youngblood, MCC Ft. Lauderdale, FL, joined us for the last four weeks. Students attending all six weeks were Michelle Carmody, MCC Eugene, OR, Jill Frankie, MCC Portland, OR, Sharon Taylor, MCC in the Valley, North Hollywood, CA, Joseph Totten, MCC Washington, D.C., Michael Weeks, MCC Washington, D.C. and Marcie

throughout the six weeks. The staff, board and fellowship hall employees went to great ends to attend to our needs. Special thanks go to Rev. Elder Jeri Ann Harvey, Rev. Marianne Van Fossen, Administrative Support Liaison, Jifke Driessen, Board of Directors Liaison and Jimmy Borge, Social Hall Director. Extra special people were the ones we saw every day: Danny, Phil, John, JoJo and especially Edith Slovack, who lovingly prepared our meals.

In addition to the space donated by MCC LA for our use, many Los Angeles residents hosted us in their homes for dinner seminars and for temporary housing during the

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RETREAT!

YOU NEED A BUFFALO

By Chris Glaser
Collective Writer

God is not the church. The church is not God. You are the church. The church is human.

God is not the church: that is, our faith in God and our belief that God created us and loves us is not dependent on the church and its willingness or unwillingness to accept us, whether as individuals in denominations outside MCC or as a denomination seeking membership in the National Council of Churches.

The church is not God: though we rightly decry the church too often playing God, we sometimes overlook, we too often expect the church to be God--that is, perfect, all-loving, unailing.

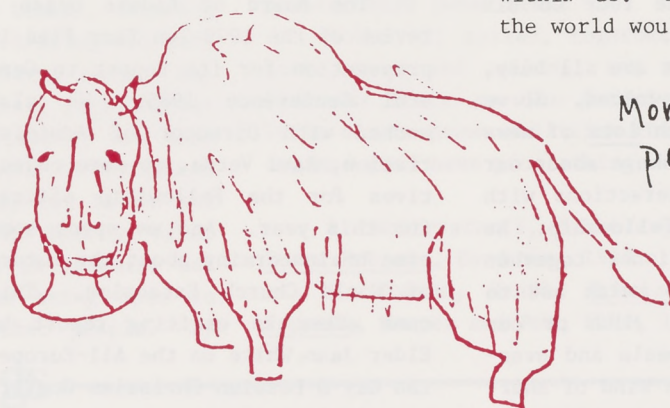
You are the church: the church is none other than ourselves, and when we complain about "the church," we also complain about ourselves, because the church is as good as we are.

The church is human: if we are the church, then it is as human as we are, similarly in need of forgiveness from us and from God and a similarly a recipient of God's grace. This is true of your local congregation when it "misses the mark" (the New Testament definition of sin) as well as of the broader church when it fails to reach out to MCC in ecumenical fellowship or

denies full access to the sacraments and ordination to its Lesbian and Gay members.

How, then, is the church different from other very human institutions? The church is different, I believe, because it is entrusted by the Spirit with God's vision of and for the world. That vision empowers and inspires the church to proclaim women and men are created in the image of God, forgiven as daughters and sons who with Christ fall heir to God's realm and called in our present lifestyles and relationships to image and imagine the future for which God has given direction in Christ Jesus and in Christ's church.

But the church--and that means us--often loses sight of that vision. Like the Elephant Man, who died of suffocation trying to sleep horizontally like everyone else, we, the church, trying to be like



More advanced
person's
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everyone else, choke the very breath of life (the Spirit) which makes the church unique as a human institution. In his book CHRISTIANITY, SOCIAL TOLERANCE AND HOMOSEXUALITY, Dr. John Boswell gives evidence the church adopted societal views of homosexuality which led to its homophobia in the late Middle Ages.

Clearly, the Spirit led the church initially to live communally, regarding women as leaders, lifting up the poor and oppressed, "turning the world upside down" before Christianity became the religion of the wealthy, educated Roman

aristocracy and gained public acceptability which led to public conformity. What early church fathers and mothers did to balance this swing to acceptance was to go out into the desert to pray, lest Christian faith be co-opted by the less passionate and less compassionate. Thus began monastic life in the fourth century.

Similarly, I regain my own sight of the Spirit's vision for the church by going on periodic, personal or group retreats. Several years ago, leading worship for a senior high camp on Catalina Island, I caught a glimpse of the realm in our playfulness together and our unconditional positive regard for one another in the midst of a peaceful, gentle environment. I returned from the week-long camp and attended a Gay party, and contrasted how complicated play and love can become in our harsher adult world of stifling the child within us. Think how differently the world would behave if Mary had

stifled or suffocated the child within her!

When we had first arrived at our campground on Catalina, there were buffalo grazing on the soccer field. Two days later, I purposed to draw my own perverted version: a soccer-eating buffalo. But a buffalo was not to be found! So I had to make do with a very imperfect memory, and the results are printed with this article. What I learned from this experience is that you need to be able to see a buffalo to draw a buffalo. As the church, we need to be able to see a vision to

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ANATOMY OF AN ELDERS' MEETING

By Nancy Wilson
Collective Writer

Do you ever wonder what the Board of Elders does at its meetings?

We do lots of different kinds of things during the four to six days we usually meet.

First of all, we are all busy, active, Fellowship-involved. So we come to meetings with lots of news and perspectives to share about our travels and our interactions with people all over the Fellowship. As of late, we have dinner together the first evening to relax and to finish our sharing. Much of our "free" time during meals and evenings we continue this kind of sharing--when we are not working on some sub-committee business.

Our agenda is always full--some business takes several meetings

to handle. We try to strike a balance between all the issues that need immediate attention, and the issues that need our long-range thought, planning and attention.

At this meeting we were one year away from General Conference XIII in Sacramento, CA! We toured the facilities, discussed logistics, met with Mr. Danny Ray (Music & Worship Planner) and discussed programs and scheduling. We also voted unanimously to give our 1985 Human Rights Award to Bishop and

(Mrs.) Melvin Wheatley. These two individuals have done so much for Gay and Lesbian people, particularly in the United Methodist Church. They were nominated by Rev. Charlie Arehart.

We chartered three churches and approved four missions, issued three advisory opinions, reviewed seven Standard Operating Procedures, received reports from most Committees, Commissions and Boards.

We also made several appointments. Of special note, we appointed Sandi Robinson of MCC-Columbus, Ohio, to co-chair the Department of Ecumenical Relations. And we appointed Rev. Jose Mojica and Rev. LaPaula Turner as alternates to the Clergy Credentials and Concerns Committee.

Lois Luneberg, formerly treasurer of the Southwest District was appointed to the Fellowship's new Board of Pensions.

The Board of Elders began a review of the 1979 Ten Year Plan in preparation for its report to General Conference 1985. We also worked with Director of Administration, Ravi Verma, on some objectives for the Fellowship offices for this year. And we spent some time brainstorming about the future of World Church Extension. This came after an exciting report by Elder Jean White on the All-European Gay & Lesbian Christian Conference in Amsterdam.

The Board also voted to reunite the Districts of Northern & Southern Australia (as of January, 1985) after years of separate administration. This move was urged by all the churches of Australia. New Zealand will continue as an Extension Area under the able leadership of Rev. Leigh Neighbors.

A new policy in fund-raising appeals that was authored by the Executive Committee of the Fellowship Finance Committee was endorsed.

The Elders had a lengthy discussion about the GSS proposal and process--Elder Don Eastman will attend the GSS meeting on behalf of

the Board of Elders at the special request of GSS.

The Elders are beginning to plan for the first four-day Elders & District Coordinators Conference in February, 1985. This is viewed by Elders and District Coordinators alike as a long-overdue opportunity for sharing and planning.

An exciting Fellowship Sunday program, "Referendum for the 21st Century" was endorsed--it will feature distribution of a taped sermon by Rev. Troy Perry and a workshop designed by Adam DeBaugh, Chair of Christian Social Action.

Copies of the minutes of Elders meeting are sent to all congregations. These will be available by September.

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program. The cost of meals were donated by area churches, MCC LA, MCC Pomona Valley, Christ Chapel MCC, MCC Long Beach and MCC in the Valley. The family at Divine Redeemer MCC spent one week preparing and serving our meals.

If we were to summarize what we achieved during the six weeks we spent together, it would be preparation. We challenged each other to look at ourselves, our skills, our weaknesses, our strengths. We learned together, and in doing so often challenged our instructors. I know some of them really were not prepared for our candor, our trust of each other, our hunger for the knowledge which they had to give.

We played together, laughing, crying, touching each other's Christ within. We shared together, our knowledge, our experience, our triumphs and fears. Most of all we loved together. So often we fail to see the Christ in each of us. This class was a true embodiment of the Body of Christ. We have made friends and colleagues which will support and cherish us through eternity. Perhaps that is the most important of all we learned.

We have paved the way for the Orientation programs to come.

continued from page 2

use and have raised to a lofty height of sacredness. It becomes us like so many other toys we could have left in the nursery. If I am "called," then you are "called," if I have "the call," then you have "the call" and we can begin to undo years of struggle and useless rhetoric. If we understand that being called is being invited to begin, not an indication of anything close to complete, but a beginning, then it is not an end to itself, not a badge to be worn, not life sustaining.

Having been called to ministry did not give Sandy Taylor a foundation to live from, but maybe having an understanding that every aspect of her life was a ministry might have.

Being called to ministry of the clergy might enable me to go through the process of application, but "the call" does not prepare or sustain me in any aspect of ministry or pastoring. Being able to see every part of me as a ministering clergy, my personality, my creativity, my what-so-ever, and understanding I am living new life might well provide the foundation I ache for.

There are not different kinds of "calls," there are different kinds of responses and different ministries. As we collectively affirm that reality, we can creatively pursue ways to grow, change and live. Clergy don't have to flounder on the inside, thinking we're so terribly different...alone...looking for more of whatever it is we think other clergy have. Lay people do not have to feel they are less, striving for more. My spirituality cannot be defined by how many hours I spend on my knees, or in prayer or scripture reading per day. My spirituality may not be at all related to any of those things held so dear by other people. My spirituality is revealed in laughter and tears, in touching other people and being open to being touched, fed and filled by other people. My

"call" only invited me to see that.

God's grace is sufficient and without division. Being "born again" means nothing in itself; the death of Christ by itself did nothing...other people have been reborn, other people have died innocent of crimes; being called is no prize. It is the quality of life after...after birth, after the cross, after saying "yes" to the invitation.

Our lives are filled with magic. There is no real magic in position or title or even affirmation, but there is a quality of magic in the reality that God calls us, over and over again. God calls us daily to live and to live freely, to laugh and to laugh heartily, to cry and to cry profoundly. Over and over again, God calls us to move on, into spontaneity, creativity, life and the journey. "The call"...well, that's a phrase we could just as easily drop as be robbed by it.

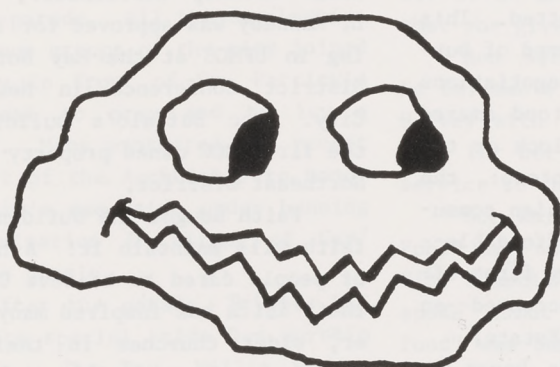
"Community develops where we experience that something significant is taking place where we are. It is the fruit of the intimate knowledge that we are together, not because we have a common need, but because we are called together to help make God's presence visible in the world. Only to the degree that we have this knowledge of God's call can we transcend our own immediate needs and point together to God who is greater than these needs."

We're all called, together on purpose, not to talk about our calling, but to do our calling, to live our lives as wine poured out and bread shared. It is our response-abilities that become life-sustaining and good-news proclaiming.

1. Wolterstorff, Nicholas, Until Justice and Peace Embrace, Eerdmans, 1983.

2. Nouwen, Henri, Gracias: A Latin American Journal, Harper and Row, N.Y., 1983, p. 66.

Mixed Blessings



SO YOU THOUGHT THAT YOU WERE SERVING COMMUNION
TO A LITTLE KID WITH LOTS OF FRECKLES, HUH?

fellowship news

our journey

THE BUILDING THAT FAITH BOUGHT MCC BUFFALO's STORY

It started last fall: the search for a more centrally located space. For two years MCC Buffalo has moved about - renting space from the downtown Unitarian Universalists, then to the Gay & Lesbian Community Center, finally to the Unitarian Universalist Church in the suburbs.

Congregation members and friends began last October checking out storefronts "to rent" in the downtown Buffalo area. Door after door seemed to close. In November, the Board sought rental space from a large downtown Presbyterian Church which had adopted "More Light" status a few months earlier. The group then believed this was God's perfect will and were just praising God for not letting them jump too quickly or force doors open on the storefront rental spaces.

Anxiously awaiting the Session's response, MCC Buffalo folks had almost started packing. The answer came -- a resounding "No!" While the Board urged Worship Coordinator, Sherry L. Kennedy to challenge the Presbyterians and request re-consideration of their decision, a couple of individuals, full of faith did some "behind the scenes" searching. Sherry recalls having to face the congregation the Sunday after learning the disappointing news from the Presbyterian Session. Very boldly, Sherry proclaimed, "When God closes one door, God opens another. This can only mean God has something better!" There came a few meek "Amen's"--



some quiet grumbling, "Better than Westminster--impossible!" "Never!" Sherry prayed under her breath, "Now God you've just got to come through on this!"

The lesson on stepping out on faith was just beginning. Within a matter of weeks a building for sale on South Elmwood was spotted. This small church hadn't dreamed of buying property--but negotiations began. The community stood amazed -- South Elmwood is a block or two from the heart of Allentown: the hub of Buffalo's Gay/Lesbian community. The price was affordable--in fact, the group's very first offer to the owner was accepted--an unheard of fact in Real Estate!

Members and friends began to pledge and bring or send checks--\$1,000, \$500, \$100, \$50, \$25, \$10 and on and on. In less than one week over half of the initial \$5,000 was raised. After some de-

lay in closing, MCC Buffalo finally moved into their own space--just in time for special Holy Week Services.

The building was basically in good condition--some construction was needed in knocking down a wall to enlarge the sanctuary, installation of new ceiling lighting and spotlights, painting, etc. One member donated a stove for the kitchen, another an air conditioner, yet another, an answering machine for the office phone, garbage cans, a brand new Xerox 1020 copier, etc. as God poured out showers of blessings.

For the first time in the short history of this ministry, the group has an office for administrative affairs, space for counseling, mid-week activities and morning worship. The opportunities for the expansion of the ministry in Buffalo are unlimited. Perhaps the most miraculous part of this blessing is that the rental income from an upstairs apartment pays their mortgage payment with \$7.00 left over each month!!

The group celebrated God's faithfulness and blessing in a Dedication Service on June 17. Rev. Brent Hawkes, Pastor of MCC Toronto was the guest speaker for the occasion.

MCC Buffalo is a Study Group with an active membership of 24. Their Worship Coordinator, Sherry L. Kennedy was approved for licensing in UFMCC at the May Northeast District Conference in New York City. MCC Buffalo's building is the first MCC owned property in the Northeast District.

Faith bought the building--and faith will maintain it! A handful of people dared to believe God and their faith has inspired many larger, older churches in their own district and surrounding districts. Sherry Kennedy, a native West Virginian, says, "If a little group like this can do it--you'all can do it too! Let go and let God...to Whom we give the glory forever!"

INSTALLATION AT TRINITY MCC

On Sunday, May 20, 1984, Trinity MCC held a lay installation service for their new worship coordinators, Rev. Phillip Eberle and Rev. Richard A. Matera. Many visitors attended from the Northeast District, including friends from MCC Providence, Albany, New York, Morning Star and ICM Queens. Dr. Marion Case, the Assistant District Coordinator, officiated and preached. The service was centered on the idea of the laity calling and empowering their new leaders and our lay assistant district coordinator installed the new worship coordinators in a simple ceremony.

During the service, the congregation presented certificates of appreciation to John Poole, who served as worship coordinator, and to Rev. Jose Parets and Rev. George S. McDermott for their encouragement and help to Trinity MCC.

During the reception following worship, the congregation presented Phil and Richard with a beautiful Communion set. Trinity MCC looks forward to a future blessed by God and guided by the Holy Spirit.

* * * * *

Trinity MCC celebrated Gay Pride Sunday with great celebration, joining there other MCC's from New York City in the largest Gay Pride Day parade in the history of the parade. All the Gay/Lesbian religious groups of the city joined Dignity in front of St. Patrick's Cathedral to pray and to lay a wreath. Many protested the recent refusal of the Archbishop to honor the city's executive order banning discrimination in hiring of Gay/Lesbian people.

After the parade, Trinity MCC held its special Pride Day worship service. The Rev. Willie White, the Northeast District Coordinator, was our guest preacher. Willie's inspiring message reminded us of our message of freedom through Christ. The worship service was a

joint service with ICM Queens. We also had in attendance guests from MCC NYC, MCC DC and Christ the Liberator MCC. Craig Schewe, of MCC NY, was the soloist, singing among his selections "The Lord's Prayer." We also laid hands on and anointed the Rev. Jose Parets, who will be going into the hospital for knee surgery. We praise God for a Spirit-filled celebration of Gay Pride Sunday!

A DECADE OF LOVE By Jan Pratt MCC Los Angeles

More than 100 close friends and associates gathered at the "Frog Pond" restaurant on July 23rd with Rev. Elder Jeri Ann Harvey in a testimonial salute to her 10 years of service in UFMCC.

It was a gala occasion and a warm and loving group of people talked about the contributions this remarkable woman has made to UFMCC, the Gay and Lesbian community and specifically MCC Los Angeles as well as in their own personal lives.

The MC for the evening was Midge Constanza. She made us laugh and she made us cry. Actually, I think someone had told her this was to be a roast, but when she got serious you could have heard a pin drop. She spoke about Rev. Harvey's "Imprint and Impact" on all of us and the love and caring that she gives.

Ron Saltzman of Councilman's Ed Edleman's office presented Rev. Harvey with a scroll, a commendation for her 10 years of dedicated service to the community.

Bob White, owner of the "Frog Pond" and now a candidate for the City Council's 13th district seat, spoke about how when the "Frog Pond" was bombed, Rev. Harvey made a visit there although he was not a member of MCC, to show her concern and caring out in the community.

Rev. Elder Nancy Wilson spoke of Rev. Harvey as a 20th Century dyke who is a good story teller

with a big heart and covered by God's Amazing Grace.

Sharon Tobin of Southern California Women for Understanding and a therapist spoke of Rev. Harvey's ability to get people in the palm of her hand and how Rev. Harvey goes to the hospitals and jails whenever she is called.

Rev. Elder Troy Perry spoke about the first time he met Rev. Harvey at General Conference 1974 in San Francisco and how together they led the Gay & Lesbian March in 1977. Perry said that Harvey was his pastor. He is a member of MCC Los Angeles and she was there for him in a time of personal tragedy.

Glen Payne, treasurer of MCC LA and Rev. Marianne Van Fossen, administrative secretary to Rev. Harvey, then made a presentation of a plaque which read: "For A Decade Of Giving to UFMCC and the Gay & Lesbian Community."

Harvey then spoke briefly, thanking everyone. She called us all family and said that God touches people, and "my God uses me." Rev. Harvey was also joined by her brother, "Bubba", and her former spouse of many years Chris Umbertino. Dianne Hayden & Jan Hutchinson were visitors from Melbourne, Australia.

Rev. Harvey was ordained by the Elders at General Conference in Denver, CO in 1979. She has truly been anointed by God. God uses her in such a mighty way. She touches so many lives, as some testified to on this night. She has set the example of being a forgiving compassionate and caring person.

The people who attended this testimonial dinner came from very diverse backgrounds. But they all have been the recipients of the love and caring of Rev. Harvey. All who were there, felt the love and unity in that room.

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"Look at the Metropolitan Community Church today – the Gay Church – almost accepted into the World Council . . . National Council of Churches. Almost. The vote was against them. But they will try again and again until they get in. And the tragedy is that they would get one vote. Because they are spoken of here in Jude as being brute beasts – that is going to the baser lust of the flesh to live immorally and so Jude describes this as apostasy. Thank God this vile and satanic system will one day be utterly annihilated and there will be a celebration in heaven."

From a Sermon on the TV Program "Old Time Gospel Hour" by Rev. Jerry Falwell, President, Moral Majority.

No, Jerry, that's not what Metropolitan Community Church is like because:



We are a caring, loving group of people.

We have created a 60-minute television documentary to confront those kind of lies, and others made by people like you who preach that we, as Lesbian and Gay males are brute beasts, not people.

Our documentary portrays the lives of women and men in the Gay community praying for and struggling to secure freedom and liberation for all people . . . teachers . . . Cuban Refugees . . . Third World People . . . persons with AIDS . . . Gay parents . . . the church and unchurched . . . youth and seniors . . . sisters and brothers around the world who seek peace and prosperity. We have shared on tape the truth that spirituality and sexuality are compatible.

Mr. Falwell, I am asking my friends for help to show it like it is. I am asking them to please send their tax-deductible donations to me to get this message on the air. And it will be on the air because my friends care.

GOD, GAYS & THE GOSPEL: This is OUR story.

A television presentation of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches.

YES! I would like to answer Jerry!

- ☐ AN ENABLER: Minimum donation of \$50.00 per year.
- ☐ A SPONSOR: Minimum donation of \$100.00 per year.
- ☐ A CONTRIBUTOR: Minimum donation of \$500.00 per year.
- ☐ A PARTNER: Minimum donation of \$1,000.00 per year.
- ☐ I cannot join at this time, but keep me on your mailing list.
- ☐ Enclosed is my donation to help defray costs.

Send your tax-deductible donations to:
Reverend Troy D. Perry
UFMCC Media Fund
5300 Santa Monica Boulevard, #304
Los Angeles, CA 90029

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____